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United Nations

Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003

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Chapter I

Attendance and organization of work

A. Date and place of the Conference

1. The International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation was held at Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 28 to 29 August 2003, in conformity with General Assembly resolutions 56/180 and 57/242. The Conference held four plenary meetings (1st to 4th).

B. Attendance

2. The following States and regional economic integration organizations were represented at the Conference:

Afghanistan
Algeria
Angola
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Bangladesh
Belarus
Belgium
Benin
Bhutan
Bolivia
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Canada
Central African Republic
Chile
China
Czech Republic
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Djibouti
Egypt
Eritrea
Ethiopia
European Community
France
Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Guinea
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Israel
Italy
Japan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kyrgyzstan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Latvia
Lesotho
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Lithuania
Malawi
Malaysia
Mali
Mongolia
Mozambique
Myanmar
Namibia
Nepal
Netherlands
Niger
Pakistan
Paraguay
Peru
Poland
Republic of Korea
Republic of Moldova
Russian Federation
Rwanda
Saudi Arabia
Slovenia
South Africa
Spain
Switzerland
Tajikistan
Thailand
Togo
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Uganda
Ukraine
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
Uzbekistan
Viet Nam
Zambia
Zimbabwe

3. The following entity, having received an invitation to participate as an observer to the Conference, was represented:

Palestine

4. The secretariats of the following regional commissions were represented:

Economic Commission for Europe

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Economic Commission for Africa

5. The following United Nations bodies and programmes were represented:

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Capital Development Fund

6. The following specialized agencies and related organizations were represented:

World Bank

International Monetary Fund

7. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented:

Asian Development Bank

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

Common Fund for Commodities

Commonwealth of Independent States

Fund for the Development of the River Plate Basin

International Chamber of Commerce

International Organization for Migration

International Road Transport Union

Islamic Development Bank

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia

World Customs Organization

C. Opening of the Conference

8. The Conference was opened on 28 August by Under-Secretary-General Anwarul Chowdhury, Secretary-General of the Conference and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, who delivered a message from the Secretary-General.

9. At its 1st meeting, on 28 August, Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan, made a statement.

10. At the same meeting, statements were also made by Zephirin Diabre (United Nations Development Programme), Kim Hak-Su (Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific), Brigita Schmognerova (Economic Commission for Europe) and Carlos Fortin (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development).

D. Election of the President of the Conference and other officers

11. At its 1st meeting, on 28 August, on the proposal of the Secretary-General of the Conference, the following officers were elected by acclamation:

President of the Conference:

Kassymzhomart K. Tokaev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan

Vice-Presidents:

African States: Ethiopia, Lesotho, Namibia
Latin American and Caribbean States: Paraguay
Western European and Other States: Italy
Asian States: Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Nepal
Eastern European Group of States: Armenia

Vice-Presidents ex officio

12. At the same meeting, the representative of Kazakhstan, as representative of the host country, and the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, as the Chairman of the Group of the Landlocked Developing Countries, were also elected as members of the Bureau ex officio.

Rapporteur

13. Also at the same meeting, Monyane Mathibeli (Lesotho) was elected by acclamation Rapporteur of the Conference.

E. Adoption of the rules of procedure

14. At its 1st meeting, on 28 August, the Conference adopted the rules of procedure as contained in document A/CONF.202/PC/3.

F. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

15. At its 1st meeting, on 28 August, the Conference adopted the provisional agenda as contained in document A/CONF.202/1. The agenda read as follows:

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
3. Election of the Bureau.
4. Consideration of the draft programme of action of the Conference.
5. Adoption of the final outcomes of the Conference.
6. Adoption of the report of the Conference.
7. Other business.

G. Credentials of representatives to the Conference

16. At the 1st meeting, on 28 August, on the proposal of the President, it was decided that the composition of the Credentials Committee would be based on that of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its fifty-seventh session, as follows: Argentina, Barbados, Belgium, China, Mali, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation and the United States of America. With regard to the report of the Credentials Committee, it was the understanding that if one of those States did not participate in the Conference, it would be replaced by another State from the same regional group.

17. At the same meeting, three alternate members of the Credentials Committee were nominated to vacant positions, namely, Indonesia, Peru and Paraguay.

18. At the 3rd meeting, on 29 August, the Conference approved the report of the Credentials Committee (A/CONF.202/2), which had examined the credentials of the representatives of the States participating in the work of the Conference and found them to be in order.

H. Documentation

19. The Conference had before it the following documents:

(a) Draft report of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference on its second session (A/CONF.202/PC.2/L.1 and Add.1);

(b) Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference on its second session (A/CONF.202/PC.2/1);

(c) Provisional rules of procedure for the Conference (A/CONF.202/PC/3);

(d) Provisional agenda of the Conference (A/CONF.202/1);

(e) Report of the Credentials Committee (A/CONF.202/2);

(f) Provisional programme of work of the Conference (A/CONF.202/CRP.1);

(g) Credentials of representatives: memorandum by the secretariat of the Conference (A/CONF.202/CRP.2);

(h) List of participants (A/CONF.202/CRP.3);

(i) Draft report of the Conference (A/CONF.202/L.1);

(j) Draft declaration of the Conference (A/CONF.202/L.2);

(k) Draft resolution entitled "Expression of thanks to the people and Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan" (A/CONF.202/L.3).

Chapter II

Consideration of the draft programme of action of the Conference

1. At the 1st meeting, on 28 August, the Chairman of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, Yoshiyuki Motomura (Japan), introduced the report of the Committee on its second session (A/CONF.202/PC.2/1).

2. The Conference considered the draft programme of action of the Conference, entitled "Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries" (A/CONF.202/PC.2/1, annex I), at its 1st to 4th meetings, on 28 and 29 August.

3. Statements were made by the representatives of the following countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Georgia, Ghana, Italy (on behalf of the European Union, as well as acceding countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland) and countries associated with the European Union (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey)), India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran (on behalf of the transit developing countries), Japan, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic (on behalf of the landlocked developing countries), Malaysia, Malawi, Mongolia, Namibia, Pakistan, Paraguay, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, South Africa, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, and Zimbabwe.

4. The representatives of the following organizations also made statements: Asian Development Bank, Common Fund for Commodities, Economic Cooperation Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Organization for Migration, International Road Transport Union, United Nations Development Programme, Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia, World Bank, World Customs Organization, Organization for Cooperation of Railways.

Chapter III

Consideration of the draft declaration of the Conference

1. At the 1st meeting, on 28 August, the representative of Kazakhstan introduced the draft declaration of the Conference, entitled "Almaty Declaration" (A/CONF.202/L.2).

2. The Conference considered the draft declaration at its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 28 and 29 August.

Chapter IV

Parallel events

1. In conjunction with the Conference, three parallel events were organized, by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on trade facilitation measures (chaired by Mathias Meyer, State Secretary for Economic Affairs of Switzerland); by the World Bank on a high-level investment forum (moderated by Maria Cattaui, Secretary-General of the International Chamber of Commerce); and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) on regional initiatives on trade and transport facilitations (keynote speakers were the Executive Secretaries of ECE and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific).

2. The participants and speakers addressed the special problems faced by landlocked developing countries, which sought to be integrated into the world economy by establishing efficient transit transport systems in both landlocked and transit developing countries. The events gathered panellists from public and private sectors, as well as developing partners; their findings and proposals were orally reported to the Conference at its 4th meeting, on 29 August.

Chapter V

Adoption of the final outcomes of the Conference

At its 4th meeting, on 29 August 2003, the Conference adopted the draft Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries (see annex I) and the draft Almaty Declaration (see annex II).

Chapter VI

Adoption of the report of the Conference

1. At the 4th meeting, on 29 August, the Rapporteur introduced the draft report of the Conference (A/CONF.202/L.1), which was adopted by consensus.

2. At the same meeting, the Conference adopted by consensus a draft resolution expressing its gratitude to the host country (see annex III).

Annex I

Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted by heads of State and Government on 8 September 2000, laid out a set of development goals which call for the creation of an environment at national and international levels conducive to development, among other things. It recognized the special needs and problems of the landlocked developing countries, which were also addressed by recent major United Nations conferences such as the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Brussels, 2001), the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, 2002) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002). The International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation has been convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/180, entitled "Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries", to review the current situation of transit transport systems, including the implementation of the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation of 1995, and to formulate, inter alia, appropriate policy measures and action-oriented programmes aimed at developing efficient transit transport systems.

2. Landlocked developing countries, as a group, are among the poorest of developing countries, with limited capacities and dependence on a very limited number of commodities for their export earnings. In addition, throughout the 1990s the growth rate of the landlocked developing countries has been in general negative or very slow. Lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets have contributed to their relative poverty, substantially inflating transportation costs and lowering their effective participation in international trade. The trade-reducing effect is strongest for transport-intensive activities. Most, if not all, landlocked developing countries are commodity exporters. The very high transport costs which they must bear constrain export development since that burden limits the range of potential exports and markets in which goods can be competitively and profitably traded. The price of imports tends to soar because of high transit transport costs.

3. In most cases, the transit neighbours of landlocked developing countries are themselves developing countries, often of broadly similar economic structure and beset by similar scarcities of resources. The least developed transit countries are in an especially difficult situation. Also transit developing countries bear additional burdens, deriving from transit transport and its financial, infrastructural and social impacts. Transit developing countries are themselves in need of improvement of technical and administrative arrangements in their transport and customs and administrative systems to which their landlocked neighbours are expected to link.

II. Partnerships

4. Efficient transit transport systems can be established through genuine partnerships between landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners at the national, bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels and through partnership between public and private sectors. Partnerships should be based on the mutual benefits deriving from the specific actions that major stakeholders have agreed to undertake in the present programme of action in order to

establish efficient transit transport systems. The international community, including financial and development institutions and donor countries, should provide financial and technical support to help those countries to deal effectively with their transit transport problems and requirements.

5. The efficiency of transit transport systems will depend on the promotion of an enabling administrative legal and macroeconomic environment in both landlocked and transit developing countries for effective policy-making and resource mobilization and on cooperative arrangements between landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours. An effective strategy to improve transit transport systems requires actions at the regional, subregional and bilateral levels for the effective solution of transit problems, which would improve transit transport safety and enable significant economies of scale, particularly relevant for landlocked developing countries. This cooperation must be promoted on the basis of the mutual interest of both landlocked and transit developing countries.

6. The role of the private sector must be taken into account. The private sector, as a service provider and as a user of transit transport services, is an important stakeholder in society and should be a main contributor to the development of infrastructure and productive capacity in both landlocked and transit developing countries.

7. The costs of establishing and maintaining an efficient transit transport system often pose a daunting challenge to the landlocked and transit developing countries. Their development partners can play an important role in supporting and assisting them in their efforts to establish efficient transit transport systems.

8. The interests and concerns of landlocked and transit developing countries should be taken fully into account while establishing transit transport systems. In this regard, the interests and concerns of landlocked and transit developing countries should be considered complementary and mutually reinforcing.

9. Regional and subregional cooperation or integration can play an important role in successfully addressing the specific problems of transit transport from, in and through developing countries. Regional cooperation or integration initiatives can also facilitate the participation of landlocked and transit developing countries in the global economy, better sharing its benefits and containing its negative effects. In this context, support from all existing sources, where requested, for mechanisms of regional and subregional dialogue and regional integration among landlocked and transit developing countries, is important.

III. Objectives

10. The objective of the present Programme of Action is to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and establish a new global framework for action for developing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries, taking into account the interests of both landlocked and transit developing countries. The Programme of Action thus aims to: (a) secure access to and from the sea by all means of transport according to applicable rules of international law; (b) reduce costs and improve services so as to increase the competitiveness of their exports; (c) reduce the delivered costs of imports; (d) address problems of delays and uncertainties in trade routes; (e) develop

adequate national networks; (f) reduce loss, damage and deterioration en route; (g) open the way for export expansion; (h) improve safety of road transport and security of people along the corridors.

IV. Priorities

Priority 1
Fundamental transit policy issues

11. It is important for landlocked and transit developing countries to review and revise their regulatory frameworks, where necessary, to allow a greater participation of the private sector; to introduce reform measures to make providers of transport services more responsive to user demands; to increase transparency of transit and border regulations; to establish streamlined administrative procedures; to further simplify border control and procedures; to promote the use of information technology; and to strengthen training programmes in the sector. Transport strategies and programmes, particularly where they involve regulation of transport operations or construction of major new infrastructure, need to take full account of environmental aspects and development needs to ensure sustainable development at local and global levels. These should be an integral part of a policy reform programme and of a poverty reduction strategy.

12. International conventions on transport and transit, as well as regional and bilateral agreements, ratified by landlocked and transit developing countries are the main vehicles by which the harmonization, simplification and standardization of rules and documentation can be achieved.

13. At the international level, development partners, in particular the multilateral aid agencies, should give high priority to sustainable transportation project financing. New infrastructure investment, including through public/private partnerships involving official development assistance and private sector investment, including foreign direct investment, would also be very important for the development of transit transport systems.

14. The following specific actions are required:

(a) An integrated approach to trade and transport sector development is needed that takes into account social and economic aspects, as well as fiscal, policy, regulatory, procedural and institutional considerations;

(b) Landlocked and transit developing countries need to give a high priority to developing and modernizing existing facilities and to increasing the commercial orientation of transport and infrastructure by eliminating non-physical barriers to transit transport;

(c) Reform in the transport sector should be actively pursued, with the greater involvement of, and partnership with, the private sector;

(d) There is a need to promote public/private sector dialogue and cooperation, with the assistance of development partners, as appropriate;

(e) The establishment of regional transport corridors and the adoption of common rules and standards, where appropriate, should play a major role in transit

transport facilitation. In that regard, the role of the regional commissions and subregional organizations should be further strengthened. In this context, the regional commissions and subregional organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America need further assistance from the international community;

(f) The existing institutional mechanisms at the policy and operational levels to monitor and promote the implementation of agreements and arrangements involving landlocked and transit developing countries should be further strengthened;

(g) Efforts should be made to promote integrated training programmes encompassing all levels, from the top management to low-level operators, in both the public and private sectors.

Priority 2
Infrastructure development and maintenance

15. Inadequate infrastructure is a major obstacle to establishing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries. The deterioration of transport infrastructure is a general problem that affects both. Communications facilities are required to facilitate advance knowledge of transport service availabilities and to ensure smooth and speedy transit. Addressing these needs will involve considerable investment, setting up of public-private partnerships, capacity-building, and new policies and institutional reform, where necessary. The share of national resources and official development assistance allocated to infrastructure development in many landlocked and transit developing countries is limited. Also, the challenge of establishing adequate infrastructure facilities and of remedying the deterioration of existing transport infrastructure in both landlocked and transit developing countries could go beyond the public sector. In particular, the financial and technical support of donors, international financial institutions and development assistance agencies remains critical. The private sector could also play an important role.

16. A prerequisite for successfully attracting private investment in infrastructure projects is a sound regulatory and institutional framework. Regional and subregional economic cooperation or integration can help to overcome problems of market size in landlocked and transit developing countries, especially in the least developed among them, and attract the private sector to invest in infrastructure development. In this context, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an important initiative, as most landlocked and transit developing countries are in this continent, and may well boost the creation of subregional and regional infrastructure. The interests and concerns of landlocked developing countries should be taken into careful consideration in the implementation of the trans-African highways, Asian highway, trans-Asian railway and international North-South corridor projects, as well as the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) and the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA).

17. The following specific actions are required:

(a) Landlocked and transit developing countries should allocate a greater share of public investment to the development of infrastructure supported by, as

appropriate, financial assistance and investment from donors, international financial institutions and development assistance agencies;

(b) Landlocked and transit developing countries should make every effort to provide a conducive environment for using all transport modes in transit transport services in order to encourage competition among different transport modes, particularly road and rail transport. At the same time, capacities and legal regimes for multimodal transport operations should be further developed;

(c) Particular attention should be given to constructing "missing links" in the regional and subregional transport network;

(d) Private-sector participation should be encouraged, also by development partners, in transit transport infrastructure development, through co-financing, Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT), and playing a catalytic role in attracting foreign direct investment, as well as facilitating increased access to bond markets;

(e) Private-public partnership platforms along trade and transport corridors should be promoted through the development and extensive use of common information and communication technology-based management and monitoring systems.

A. Rail transport

18. Railways have an important role to play in the transit transport corridor systems linking ocean ports with landlocked developing countries. Major concerns are the persistent problem of limited availability of equipment, including locomotives and wagons, and poor maintenance standards. There are also additional problems associated with establishing inter-railway agreements.

19. The following specific actions are required:

(a) The possibility of establishing new railway connections and rehabilitation programmes for existing railway facilities as a matter of priority, in conjunction with new technological improvements and innovations, should be examined at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels;

(b) Landlocked and transit developing countries should, as a matter of priority, improve the maintenance of track and rolling stock, purchase new rolling stock and expand the railway network, where justified by traffic volume;

(c) Landlocked and transit developing countries should also pay special attention to the benefits of the harmonization of gauges, where feasible, the development of reloading capacities, the expansion of training programmes and inter-railway staff exchange programmes;

(d) Governments are encouraged to consider adhering to relevant international conventions related to rail and combined transport, which provide internationally accepted rules for an efficient and safe environment of inter-country rail and combined transport operations, as well as ensuring the institutional development to implement them.

B. Road transport

20. Road transport is an increasingly important mode of transport for the imports and exports of landlocked developing countries. In particular, road transport is the main mode of transit transport in Africa. For the expansion of roads, transit infrastructure sizeable resource allocations are required. The key problem areas, particularly with regard to international road transport, are the worsening road safety due to inadequate calibration, absence of social infrastructure along the transit corridors and particularly the ageing of transport means and poor maintenance, which are closely associated with the practice of overloading vehicles.

21. The following specific actions are required:

(a) The subregional and regional infrastructure development plans should give high priority to transit corridors linking landlocked developing countries to the transport network in transit developing countries, as well as to the regional network;

(b) Landlocked and transit developing countries should consider taking the necessary initiatives to accede to and implement relevant international conventions related to road transport;

(c) At the bilateral, subregional and regional levels, consideration should be given to taking measures to gradually liberalize road transport services, taking into account specific circumstances in landlocked and transit developing countries, and to facilitating road operational planning and management, through expansion of the databases on road transit and review of the quota system and transit and transportation costs and of other measures such as roadblocks and custom supervised convoys.

C. Ports

22. The efficiency of port operations depends on adequate infrastructure and good management. Many seaports are a critical bottleneck in the transit systems because of a range of physical inadequacies and operational constraints. Problems of quality of handling and storage facilities for transit cargo, cumbersome procedures for the clearing and release of cargo, congestion and the shortage of skilled manpower, are particularly relevant.

23. The following specific actions are required:

(a) Landlocked and transit developing countries should seek cooperative arrangements to improve port facilities and services for transit goods, including the modernization of existing terminals, the establishment of new ones and the simplification of procedures where appropriate;

(b) Expand the capacity to handle transit trade, also allowing private terminal operations to promote competition and encourage efficiency;

(c) A greater cooperation and coordination should be promoted between public and private institutions dealing with transit traffic in ports (customs administration, security personnel, port authorities, commercial banks, clearing and forwarding agents, insurance companies);

(d) The establishment of dry ports in landlocked and transit developing countries should be promoted;

(e) Training programmes for port workers should be expanded to enable them to adapt to new technologies and procedures.

D. Inland waterways

24. Inland waterways provide transit services to some landlocked developing countries. The efficiency of transit services along such waterways requires better infrastructure, appropriate legal frameworks to govern river/lake navigational operations and more effective environmental and safety measures.

25. The following specific actions are required:

(a) Further efforts should be undertaken to rehabilitate and expand the lake/river infrastructure facilities along the corridors linking landlocked developing countries to ocean ports;

(b) Consideration should be given to the establishment of legal and other arrangements for collaborative actions at the subregional level and to promote more efficient river/lake transit systems;

(c) The development of new waterways, where possible, should be explored. Also, the maintenance and expansion of existing waterways should be encouraged, when appropriate, with the assistance of financial institutions.

E. Pipelines

26. Pipelines provide a cost-effective means of transport for both oil and natural gas. The planning and construction of pipelines require close cooperation between landlocked and transit developing countries. The substantive investments that are required for the construction of pipelines necessitate capital investment from the private sector as well.

27. The following specific action is required: landlocked and transit developing countries should cooperate and coordinate to construct pipelines along the most cost-effective and most suitable or shortest routes, taking into account the interests of parties concerned.

F. Air transport

28. Air transport offers landlocked developing countries a means of avoiding the transit problems associated with overland and overseas freight movements. However, only very high-value and low-bulk commodities can support the costs of airfreight rates.

29. The following specific actions are required.

(a) Physical infrastructure facilities (aircraft, runway, air navigation system, airport handling and storage) need to be expanded;

(b) Governments should progressively liberalize their policies regarding the granting of traffic rights for freight on scheduled services and lift any restrictions on cargo charter flights, making a more effective use of existing freight capacity possible;

(c) Pooling of air transport arrangements at the regional, subregional and bilateral levels should be further promoted to permit economies of scale;

(d) Training programmes at the national and subregional levels should be expanded.

G. Communications

30. The remoteness of landlocked developing countries from seaports and overseas markets, compounded by inadequate communication links with various ports and commercial centres, continues to be a major handicap inhibiting the rapid movement of transit cargo. Cargo monitoring systems, which give advance and tracking information on cargo moving within interfaces and along modes, could significantly reduce delays.

31. The following specific action is required: telecommunications facilities should be expanded, private-sector participation in that regard should be encouraged and the management of such facilities should be streamlined.

Priority 3
International trade and trade facilitation

32. Trade is an important engine for economic development. However, the participation of landlocked and transit developing countries in international trade, which is crucial for their development prospects, is not as significant as it could be. Also, a good number of the landlocked and transit developing countries are not members of the World Trade Organization. Therefore, they miss out on the benefits that membership in and the rules of the World Trade Organization, including those on special and differential treatment, provide.

33. One of the main causes of the marginalization of landlocked developing countries from the international trading system is high trade transaction costs. Trade and transport are inextricably linked. Transport is a key sector for international trade, for regional integration and for ensuring a balanced national development. Excessive transport costs create a major effective barrier to foreign markets. In this context, due note was taken of the request of landlocked developing countries that the current negotiations on market access for agricultural and non-agricultural goods should consider giving particular attention to products of special interest to landlocked developing countries.

34. Important sources of additional and avoidable costs and inefficiency can include cumbersome border-crossing, customs procedures, documentation requirements and inadequate infrastructure facilities, as well as costly bank transactions. Landlocked developing countries, with additional border crossings and transit dependence can be at a particular disadvantage, depending on the state of their own and their neighbours' border procedures and level of bilateral cooperation, as well as regional cooperation or integration.

35. International conventions and regional, subregional and bilateral agreements are the main means through which streamlining, simplification and standardization and the transparency of rules and procedures can be achieved. Their full and effective implementation requires strong political commitment at the national level.

36. The Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, held in Doha in 2001, recognized the case for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit,

and the need for enhanced technical assistance and capacity-building in this area. Also, the decision in the same declaration that the World Trade Organization programme would address issues related to the trade of small, vulnerable economies and their full integration in the multilateral trading system was a welcome step for most landlocked and transit developing countries.

37. The following specific actions are required:

(a) The accession of landlocked and transit developing countries to the World Trade Organization should be further accelerated. In this respect, the accession process for landlocked and transit developing countries should take into account their individual level of development, including special needs and problems caused by the geographical disadvantage. The development partners should provide assistance in this matter;

(b) The Monterrey Consensus recognizes the importance of enhanced and predictable access to all markets for the exports of developing countries, including landlocked and transit developing countries. In accordance with the commitments in the Doha Ministerial Declaration, in particular paragraphs 13 and 16, and the rules of the World Trade Organization, current negotiations should give full attention to the needs and interests of developing countries, including landlocked and transit developing countries;

(c) Landlocked and transit developing countries should be provided assistance in the area of trade facilitation in the light of the agreement in the Doha Ministerial Declaration that the negotiations will take place after the fifth session of the Ministerial Conference on the basis of a decision to be taken by explicit consensus at that session, on the modalities of negotiations;

(d) More efforts are required within available financial resources to facilitate transit traffic through border posts, to expand the use of information technology, to implement efficient customs control systems and simplification of documents and procedures, and to strengthen the capacity-building of government agencies in the field of trade and trade facilitation;

(e) Landlocked and transit developing countries should consider becoming a party to and implementing effectively the international conventions and instruments that are applicable to various transport segments, including road, rail, inland waterways and multimodal transport;

(f) Landlocked and transit developing countries should consider establishing, where appropriate, and/or strengthening existing national trade and transport boards or committees involving all major stakeholders, including the private sector.

Priority 4
International support measures

38. The cost implications of meeting the requirements to establish and maintain an efficient transit transport system are of such magnitude that the landlocked and transit developing countries cannot by themselves accomplish that formidable task. Many of the landlocked developing countries are among the poorest countries. Most of the transit countries are themselves developing countries with limited resources.

The development partners should play an important role in supporting transit transport development programmes. Such support should take fully into account the special vulnerabilities and developmental needs of landlocked and transit developing countries in providing assistance to them.

38 bis. The primary responsibility for implementing the present Programme of Action should rest with landlocked and transit developing countries. It is essential that they seek to create conditions in which resources can be generated, attracted and effectively mobilized to address their development challenges, including those that result from being landlocked.

39. The following specific actions are required:

(a) The international community, including financial and development institutions and donor countries, should play an important supporting role to assist those countries to deal effectively with their transit transport problems and requirements, including, inter alia, by:

(i) Facilitating an external environment supportive of full and timely realizing of the objectives of the present Programme of Action;

(ii) Facilitating access to, and encouraging transfer of, technologies related to transit transport systems, including information and communication technology;

(iii) Providing technical support through partnership;

(iv) Encouraging increased foreign direct investment to contribute to the development and upgrading of transit transport infrastructure;

(b) A substantial increase in official development assistance and other resources is required in the mobilization of financial and technical assistance from all sources and existing mechanisms, including the private sector. Donor countries and multilateral financial and development institutions should be encouraged to continue their efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the commitments reached in the Monterrey Consensus, in particular, paragraphs 41-43, with the aim of providing landlocked and transit developing countries with appropriate financial and technical assistance in the form of grants and/or loans on the most concessional terms possible, for the needs identified in the present Programme of Action;

(c) The criteria and procedures used to evaluate the viability of transit transport infrastructure projects and programmes, as well as to approve the funds for them, should take into account the particular economic and institutional weaknesses and needs of landlocked and transit developing countries and the necessity of creating additional capacities, with due regard to traffic development prospects;

(d) Special attention should be given to financial and technical assistance in the areas of institutional capacity-building in landlocked and transit developing countries to promote effective government policy-making and practices in addressing their transport and transit needs;

(e) More cost-effective and innovative modalities and sources for financing, such as local costs and recurrent cost financing, untied aid and arrangements such as regional trusts, and regional investment authorities should, where appropriate, also be examined.

40. The following areas should be considered a priority for financial assistance:

(a) Investments designed to complete "missing links" in the transit transport chain to extend railways and roads to landlocked developing countries;

(a bis) Maintenance of existing physical transit transport infrastructure;

(a ter) Construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of oil and gas pipelines;

(b) Development and maintenance of cost-effective routes;

(c) The development of dry port projects in landlocked and transit developing countries;

(d) Projects to improve existing or establish adjacent border points;

(e) Joint projects in trade and production to help bolster subregional and regional trade;

(f) Rehabilitation and reconstruction of the transport infrastructure, particularly in countries or regions emerging from war and internal conflict and natural disasters.

41. The following areas should be considered a priority for technical assistance:

(a) Promoting the implementation of agreed bilateral, subregional, regional and international transit agreements;

(b) Promoting social and market-oriented transit transport policies;

(c) Encouraging the exchange of experience related to the development and management of transit transport systems in different regions;

(d) Promoting and implementing privatization programmes within the transport sector, where appropriate;

(e) Establishing training programmes, inter alia, in the area of customs, including documentation and transit procedures; freight forwarding and clearing of transit cargo; infrastructure and equipment maintenance; road safety; environmental protection in the transit transport sector; transit insurance; dry port development and management; and expanding regional databases on road transport;

(f) Initiating trade facilitation projects aiming at simplifying, streamlining and standardizing import, export and customs procedures and related capacity-building of particular human resources;

(g) Assisting Governments in elaborating the implications of acceding to relevant international conventions;

(h) Facilitating increased access to bond markets and enhanced risk-sharing between the financing organizations of the public and private sectors.

Priority 5
Implementation and review

42. The implementation of the present Programme of Action requires individual and concerted efforts by the landlocked and transit developing countries; their development partners; the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system; relevant international organizations, such as the World Bank, the regional development banks, the World Trade Organization and the World Customs Organization; the Common Fund for Commodities, regional economic integration organizations, and other relevant regional and subregional organizations.

43. Bilateral, regional and subregional cooperation is the most important element in establishing efficient transit transport systems and must be promoted on the basis of the mutual interests of both landlocked and transit countries. Arrangements must be established, where necessary, and further strengthened for regular review and monitoring of the implementation of transit agreements through public and private sector dialogue and consultations. The private sector should be actively involved in the implementation of the present Programme of Action.

44. Relevant international organizations, including the World Bank, the World Customs Organization and other relevant international and regional organizations, are invited to give priority to requests for technical assistance to supplement national and regional efforts to promote the efficient use of existing transit facilities, including the application of information technologies and the simplification of procedures and documents.

45. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development needs to continue to consider programmes concerning electronic commerce, trade facilitation and trade issues in landlocked and transit developing countries. Its Special Programme for the Least Developed, Landlocked and Small Island Developing Countries should continue to carry out analytical work and technical assistance related to the transit transport problems of landlocked developing countries within its mandate.

46. South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation with the involvement of donors should be further promoted, as well as cooperation among subregional and regional organizations.

47. The regional commissions are invited to consider, as appropriate, further expanding their programmes consistent with the present Programme of Action to support the landlocked and transit developing countries in their efforts to improve their transit transport systems, and development partners should consider providing the appropriate financial support in that regard. Due note was also taken of the outcomes of the regional preparatory meetings: the African Action Plan, the Asian Action Plan and the Asunción Programme of Action.

48. Specific subregional meetings should be organized, where appropriate, to consider how to implement effectively the present Programme of Action in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/227, where applicable, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the World Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the regional commissions and other relevant international and regional/subregional organizations are invited, as appropriate, to provide support to

landlocked and transit developing countries in organizing those subregional meetings.

49. The United Nations General Assembly is invited to consider conducting a comprehensive review of the implementation of the present Programme of Action at a moment to be decided upon, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/270 B. The Office of the High Representative should coordinate the preparatory process for the review. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the World Bank and the regional commissions are invited to provide substantive and technical assistance for that process.

50. The Secretary-General of the United Nations should report, on the basis of the information provided by Member States and relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, on the implementation of the present Programme of Action to the General Assembly, which is invited to decide its periodicity.

51. In accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/227, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States is requested to, inter alia, enhance its cooperation and coordination with organizations within the United Nations system, particularly those engaged in operational activities on the ground in landlocked and transit developing countries, to ensure effective implementation of the Programme of Action in line with General Assembly resolution 57/270 B. The Office of the High Representative will continue to carry out advocacy work to mobilize international awareness and focus attention on the implementation of the present Programme of Action.

Annex II

Almaty Declaration

We, the Governments participating in the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation in Almaty in August 2003,

Having gathered to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and to establish a new global framework for transit transport cooperation for landlocked and transit developing countries, taking into account the interests of both landlocked and transit developing countries,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1] in which heads of States and Governments recognized the special needs and problems of the landlocked developing countries and urged both bilateral and multilateral donors to increase financial and technical assistance to this group of countries to meet their special development needs and to help them overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems,

Having resolved to create an environment, at the national and global levels alike, that is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty,

Having adopted the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries,

Declare that:

1. *We believe* that increased trade is essential for the economic growth and sustainable development of developing countries. However, the participation of landlocked and transit developing countries in international trade is not as significant as it could be.

2. *We recognize* that a major reason for the marginalization of landlocked developing countries from the global trading system is high trade transaction costs. Trade and transport are inextricably linked. Transport costs are a key determinant of international trade competitiveness.

3. *We commit* to work towards minimizing the current marginalization and enhancing the beneficial integration of landlocked developing countries into the global economy. To this end, *we will strive* to establish efficient transit transport systems in both landlocked and transit developing countries.

4. *We believe* that transit transport cooperation is of considerable mutual benefit to both landlocked and transit developing countries. *We are aware* that the transit countries concerned are themselves developing countries, often of broadly similar economic structure and beset by similar scarcity of resources as the landlocked developing countries.

[1] General Assembly resolution 55/2.

5. *We reaffirm* the right of access of landlocked countries to and from the sea and freedom of transit through the territory of transit countries by all means of transport, in accordance with applicable rules of international law.

6. *We also reaffirm* that transit countries, in the exercise of their full sovereignty over their territory, have the right to take all measures necessary to ensure that the rights and facilities provided for landlocked countries in no way infringe upon their legitimate interests.

7. *We recognize* that the primary responsibility for establishing effective transit systems rests with the landlocked and transit developing countries. *We encourage* them to implement measures to further strengthen their cooperative and collaborative efforts to address transit transport issues by improving the physical infrastructure and non-physical aspects of transit transport systems and, in this respect, *we emphasize* the role of South-South cooperation.

8. *We emphasize* the need for a substantial increase in official development assistance and other resources in the mobilization of financial and technical assistance from all sources and existing mechanisms, including the private sector. *We encourage* donor countries and multilateral financial and development institutions to continue their efforts to ensure effective implementation of the commitments reached in the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,[2] in particular its paragraphs 41 to 43, with the aim of providing landlocked and transit developing countries with the appropriate financial and technical assistance in the form of grants and/or loans on the most concessional terms possible for the needs identified in the Almaty Programme of Action.

9. *We also emphasize* that the private sector, as a service provider and as user of transit system services, is an important stakeholder in society and should be a main contributor to the development of infrastructure and productive capacity in both landlocked and transit developing countries.

10. *We note* the important role that the simplification, streamlining and standardization of transit procedures and documentation and the application of information technologies have played in enhancing the efficiency of transit systems, and call upon relevant entities of the United Nations and other international organizations, including the World Bank, the regional commissions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Customs Organization, and regional economic integration organizations, to continue to assist, upon request, landlocked and transit developing countries in those areas, in accordance with their respective mandates.

11. *We recall* the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization,[3] which recognized the case for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit, and the need for enhanced technical assistance and capacity-building in this area. We also recall the decision in the same Declaration that the World Trade

[2] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[3] A/C.2/56/7, annex.

Organization would address issues related to the trade of small, vulnerable economies and their full integration in the multilateral trading system.

12. *We recognize* that excessive transport costs create a major effective barrier to foreign markets. In this regard, we note the request of landlocked developing countries that the current negotiations on market access for agricultural and non-agricultural goods should consider giving particular attention to products of special interest to landlocked developing countries.

13. *We recognize* the importance of enhanced and predictable access to all markets for the exports of developing countries, including landlocked and transit developing countries. In accordance with the commitments contained in the Doha Ministerial Declaration, in particular its paragraphs 13 and 16, and the rules of the World Trade Organization, current negotiations should give full attention to the needs and interests of developing countries, including landlocked and transit developing countries.

14. *We reaffirm* our commitment to facilitate the further development of landlocked developing countries. The establishment of efficient transit transport systems and the integration of landlocked developing countries into the global economy will be achieved through genuine partnerships between landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners at the national, bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels.

15. *We emphasize* the critical importance of the effective implementation of and regular follow-up to the Almaty Programme of Action, and *we commit* ourselves to this end. *We request* the United Nations High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to ensure that the Conference is effectively followed up, within his mandate and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Annex III

Expression of thanks to the people and Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation,

Having met in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 28 to 29 August 2003 at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan,

1. *Expresses its deep appreciation* to His Excellency Mr. Kassymzhomart Tokaev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, for his outstanding contribution, as Chairman of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, to the successful outcome of the Conference;

2. *Expresses its profound gratitude* to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for having made it possible for the Conference to be held in Kazakhstan and for the excellent facilities, staff and services so graciously placed at its disposal;

3. *Requests* the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan to convey to the city of Almaty and to the people of Kazakhstan the gratitude of the Conference for the very generous and kind hospitality and the warm and cordial reception extended to the participants throughout their stay in Kazakhstan.

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